A Dutch painter possibly of English descent, Edwaert Colyer (who later anglicised his name to Edward Collier) worked in Leiden and later Amsterdam. He moved to London in 1693, where he worked until 1706. During this period in London he was active as a painter of still lives and trompes l'oeil. This trompe-l'oeil painting is a virtuoso representation of the painter's skill at making a flat surface appear three-dimensional. Objects represented are a letter rack with writing materials including a quill, sticks of sealing wax, a stamp and a paper knife. There is also a folded news sheet, a copy of the almanac Apollo Anglicanus and a medal representing Charles I. These three items allude to the accession of Queen Anne, which occurred on 8 March 1702 (1701 old style). Collier's signature appears as an inscription on a folded sheet of paper.

**Descriptive line**

Oil painting, 'Trompe l'oeil with Writing Materials', Edwaert Colyer, late 17th century

**Physical description**

Trompe l'oeil painting

**Dimensions**

Height: 51.5 cm, Width: 63.7 cm, Height: 630 mm frame, Width: 800 mm frame, Depth: 55 mm frame

**Museum number**

P.23-1951

**Object history note**

Purchased from the dealer Robert Frank, 1951

**URL**

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O17810/trompe-loeil-with-writing-materials-oil-painting-colyer-edwaert/